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Original Research Article

Consumption of Mature Media, Public Perception, and Social Treatment of Consumers with Limited Comprehensive Sexuality Education

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Abstract - *The study aimed to determine the relationships among mature media consumption, public perceptions, and social treatment of consumers through 279 respondents from 12th Grade students of Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School for School Year 2026–2027. Adolescent exposure to digital mature media including East Asian webcomics (manhwa, manga, manhua), fanfictions, and erotic digital art has increased significantly, yet it remains heavily stigmatized. In the Philippines, conservative societal views and inconsistent Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) foster negative stereotypes toward consumers of "Not Safe for Work" (NSFW) content. This quantitative study examined the relationships among mature media consumption, public perceptions, and social treatment among senior high school students at GCCNHS. Grounded in Cultivation theory, Social Learning theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior, Socio-ecological Systems Theory, the research employed a stratified sampling technique to select certain Grade 12 students per academic and TVL strand, ensuring proportional representation across the population. Data were gathered using a structured, researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire measuring students' exposure habits, perceived stigma, and peer behaviors. Mean, standard deviation and Spearman's ρ (rho) analyzed engagement frequency, public perception scores, and social treatment dynamics while testing null hypotheses regarding variable correlations. Ultimately, the empirical outcomes seek to address literature gaps concerning digital subculture erotica and provide actionable insights for refining Department of Education (DepEd) CSE curricular integration advancing evidence-based, objective approaches to adolescent digital health and media literacy.*

Keywords - *Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Mature Media, Public Perception, Social Treatment.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, production and exposure of explicit materials online have risen exponentially. The simultaneous lockdowns worldwide have spiked the usage of technology and the internet, allowing unrestricted access among adults, and especially, children (Biota et al., 2022). In PornHub alone; the world's largest pornographic video-sharing site has received a heightened 11% global traffic on the website. With PornHub's premium services being made free, a huge spike of usage erupted in France, Spain, and Italy varying from 57%, 38%, and 61% increase respectively. Similar patterns were observed in US and Asian jurisdictions of the porn site particularly, in the Philippines (Mestre-Bach et al., 2020).

Today, mainstream pornography is not simply profitable media catered predominantly towards male audiences. It has evolved into a diverse plethora of pornographic instruments from lewd animations, artworks, and fictions (Petit, 2025). Notably, "Not Safe for Work" (NSFW) had been the revolving term around the erotica field originating from the August 2000 to label content deemed "unprofessional" to be discussed or shared in professional settings through Stile Project, which was a platform to share explicit materials. It is one of the oldest

internet acronyms pertaining to graphic images and the likes. Subsequently, netizens have been using NSFW as a term to indicate warning of graphic content ahead (Paasonen et al., 2019).

"Not Safe for Work" (NSFW) has become the label upon mature media, especially for self-publishing authors and creators. Primarily, Wattpad, an indie publishing application for fiction, has become a ground for content with mild to extreme erotic material involved. Works labeled as for young adults (YA) have some of the most NSFW themes embedded into the media adding into the increasing incorporation of adult themes during the pandemic and until now (Anciones-Anguita & Pastor-Cerezo, 2025). Comparatively, Archive of Our Own (AO3) is seen as a more "mature" area of self-publishing whether anonymous or not. It delivers more adult themes than Wattpad, hence its "aristocracy" in fandom and literary culture of today's digital heritage.

Due to the wider and diverse plots offered in AO3 and the NSFW world in general, a "citrus scale" is used to categorize different levels of "maturity" in terms of explicit content. For one, a work may be classified as "orange" if it contains only romantic and cutesy themes; "lime," if it has minimal to moderate insinuations of suggestive themes without fully delving into the explicit scene itself; whereas works under "lemon" are classified there for its extreme nudity, graphic imagery, and overall detailed composition of explicit maturity (Rouse & Stanfill, 2025). These terminologies allow internet users to easily navigate throughout the world of pornographic materials. Although NSFW materials consumed by younger generations now are different from the normalized live-action porn featuring actual humans performing a sexual act on media, these pornographic materials are not any less different; only that it is delivered through a different medium palatable for the newer audience. However, these accessibilities extremely make it easier for adolescents to intake NSFW content whether for leisure or as "guilty pleasure." It also pushes stigma to arise around the content, disallowing room for proper sexuality education.

In Asia, legal frameworks around mature media are institutionalized due to its reputation for being too obscene for viewing. Over mainland China and Hong Kong, pornographic materials and queer media frequently face censorship following its socialist regulations that more often than not prohibits public and online expression involving sexuality. With the constant mass surveillance of the Chinese government among its citizens, there is a strict control on the internet often being shown as Chinese-state controlled media. Authorities have imposed legislative measures to monitor what goes in and out of websites, alongside its content. Notably, there have been multiple prosecutions in Hong Kong for distributing obscene images online. Due to this, Chinese parents seldom talk to their children about sexuality and pornography (Yan, 2014).

South Korea is also known for its lack of sexuality education; focusing on the strict implementation of internet filtering, including the automatic block of pornographic websites. Citizens have to undergo required identification and verification to access these blocked contents (Bartolozzi et al., 2025). In comparison to China, South Korea has a more flexible option when it comes to pornography and its access. Additionally, sexuality education is becoming an open topic in academic discourses in South Korea, allowing younger generations to properly get educated in these subjects.

Nevertheless, the Philippines remain at a different level. Albeit a predominantly Christian country, it has consistently ranked one of the highest consumers in porn sites most notably, in PornHub (Mestre-Bach et al., 2020). Pornography by itself remains a taboo as it supposedly endangers the Christian ethics. There are numerous specific laws passed including the Anti-Photo and Voyeurism Act of 2009, the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 (repealed for Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act) and the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 all of which intended to combat the prevalent nature of non-consensual acquisition and dissemination of explicit images and videos. Ironically, there are almost no "bans" or "blocks" similar to South Korea's Telecommunications Business Act (TBA) which is the first censorship law in the world to the Filipinos' access to porn sites and other NSFW materials that can be easily acquired on the internet.

Apart from enactments towards online safety against Online Sexual Abuse Exploitation of Children (OSAEC), cybercrimes, and blackmailing, are efforts within the education system to instill sexuality and reproductive

health-specific programs. The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, Comprehensive Sexuality Education is a mandatory program under the Department of Education (DepEd) curriculum to be integrated from Kinder to Grade 12. Policy guidelines are outlined by DepEd Order No. 31, series of 2018. This was incorporated to teach foundational concepts among children and full reproductive health concepts towards teenagers; aligning itself to the standards of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for evidence-based reproductive health education (UNESCO, 2024).

Under the existing curriculum, CSE tackles reproductive health, human development (puberty, body autonomy), relationships, sexual health (HIV/STI awareness, contraception methods, pregnancy), and rights and protection. Yet, the department's integration of CSE within the existing curriculum of the students, the lack of materials, teacher training, and sensitivity keeps the implementation inconsistent (Marcelo & Kim, 2025). This is also rooted from the constant religious opposition and direct "taboo" perceptions of older generations towards sexuality in general (Alilunas et al., 2026). With today's popularized mature media (e.g. erotica) and Filipino exposure to unrestricted internet access, it is easier for adolescents to view NSFW materials anytime, anywhere. Despite the ongoing trend, there is a consistent stigma around smut or erotica as a whole, stemming from the lack of education and the Christian morality that heavily influences social perception around the subject (Alilunas et al., 2026). This study seeks to address the gap of academia related to mature media consumption that focuses on the stigma around erotic materials especially with the rampant rise of "smut" media.

The lack of studies around mainstream pornography involving fanfictions, East Asian comics, and artworks disallows further exploration around mature media in the continuously evolving internet making recent studies less flexible with its focus on live-action pornography (and/or traditional pornography). Moreover, a significant deficiency among studies around sexually explicit materials within the Philippines is a proof of complex contextualization in the locality from multiple factors such as religious beliefs, normalized stigma, stereotypes, and harmful basis of judgment. It also opens an avenue of mature media research for non-Metro Manila/NCR location, given the different accessibility and culture around or within smaller, provincial cities.

In line with the 2015 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4, and 5; Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, and Gender Equality respectively, the purpose of this paper is to promote healthy conversations around mature media. It intends to open up the eyes of others particularly among students and the public in general about the viewing of NSFW materials to not circle around a brand of being explicitly harmful and shameful to intake. Allowing an open-minded approach to mainstream pornography popular among adolescents nowadays permits in-depth exploration and less one-dimensional evidence-based assumptions upon mature media letting educators, policymakers, and academia to delve on another side of explicit materials consumed by the latter generations. The findings intend to be a basis of how to properly implement Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into institutions, reinforcing its program into becoming safer and transparent around sex education; not only focusing on reproductive health, awareness, and policies, but also understanding the cause and effects of consuming mature media and/or pornography with sensitivity and insight.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Research Framework

a. Theoretical Framework

This study examined the relationship between the consumption of mature media, public perceptions, and the social treatment of individuals who consume such content while lacking Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). The study is primarily anchored on Cultivation Theory developed by George Gerbner (1976), posits that prolonged exposure to media gradually shapes an individual's perception of reality. Through repeated media consumption, individuals cultivate beliefs and attitudes that reflect the message consistency portrayed by the media.

In the context of the study, students who frequently consume mature media may develop distinct perceptions about sexuality, relationships, and intimacy based on the content they view. Likewise, the general public and

peer groups may form their own perceptions about media consumers through repeated exposure to media portrayals, stereotypes, and online discussions. Crucially, among individuals who lack Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), media environments often become the primary source of information about sexuality, which increases the likelihood of misconceptions, unrealistic beliefs, and altered social dynamics within the school environment.

These cognitive shifts are further clarified through Alber Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which asserts that individuals learn, adopt values, and model their behaviors through the direct observation and imitation of others within their social environment. Bandura's framework provides the vital link between the student body observing peer consumption habits, processes them through cognitive evaluations, and ultimately models their active social behavior that results in the explicit forms of peer acceptance, avoidance, respect or discrimination observed in the school environment. This study is also anchored on Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (1991), which posits that human behavior is driven by conscious intentions, which are shaped by three core cognitive components: Attitudes toward a behavior, Subjective Norms (perceived social pressure), and Perceived Behavioral Control (the perceived ease or difficulty of performing an action). In the context of this study, the Independent Variable is where the Consumption of Mature Media (Manhwas, Fanfictions, etc.) is treated as a deliberate behavior executed by Grade 12 students. According to Ajzen's model, this consumption behavior is highly dependent on the student's perceived behavioral control, which is vastly magnified by modern digital access.

Furthermore, as demonstrated by Pelling and White (2009) in their structural expansion of the Theory of Planned Behavior, prolonged engagement with these online platforms is intrinsically linked to an adolescent's evolving self identity and psychological need for group belonging. Consequently, students actively participate in digital subcultures, such as Wattpad, Archive of Our Own (AO3), and various platforms to satisfy these internal developmental needs. By embedding themselves within these alternative digital communities, adolescents established media consumption habits that frequently diverge from mainstream societal expectations and traditional peer norms. To properly address the distinct nature of contemporary youth digital behavior, this study incorporate the empirical insights of Sebsbie and Tsegaye (2025), who utilize the Socio-ecological Systems Theory concerning adolescent exposure to explicit digital environments. This perspective highlights how ubiquitous smartphone accessibility and non-monitored online platforms lower behavioral barriers, granting teenagers the privacy and control necessary to access mature materials discreetly.

b. Conceptual Framework

This framework illustrates the conceptual foundation of the study. It established the academic principles that explain the variables under investigation and details the conceptual paradigm showing how the consumption of mature media affects the outcomes of public perception and social treatment and its relationship to each other.

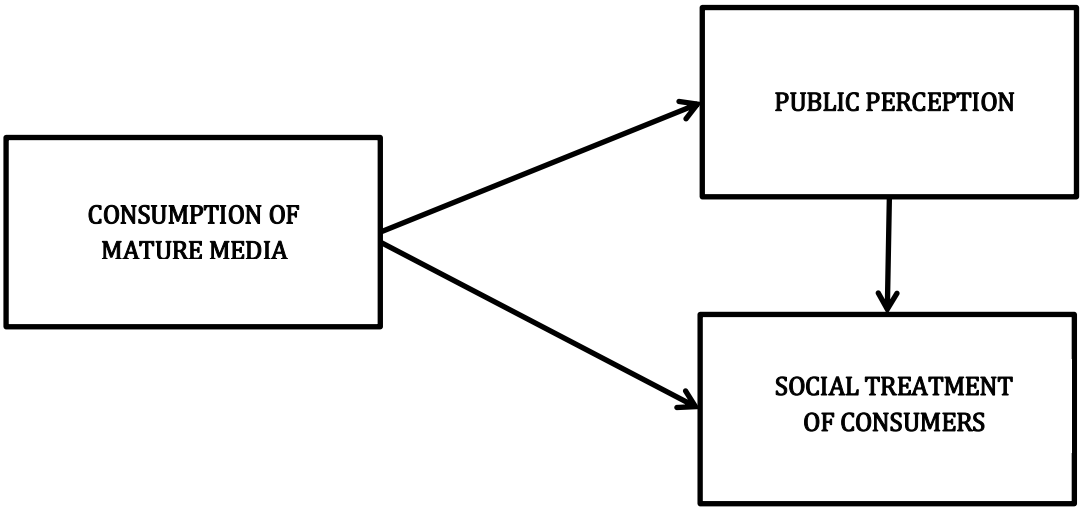

Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Interplay of Variables in the Study

B. Research Design

This study applied a correlational research design to examine the relationship among mature media consumption, public perceptions, and social treatment toward consumers within the school environment. According to Brodowicz (2024), a correlational research design enables researchers to determine the relationship between two variables using a single group of participants without manipulating or altering any of the variables. Therefore, this design was appropriate for determining whether a relationship exists between the variables in the study.

C. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School, located in Barangay 23, National Highway, Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The school offers complete Junior High School education with several special programs, including the Special Program in Journalism (SPJ), Special Program in the Arts (SPA), Special Program in Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE), and the Enhanced Basic Education Program (EBEP). It also offers complete Senior High School education under the Academic Track and the Technical-Vocational- Livelihood under the old SHS Curriculum and Technical-Professional (TechPro) Track for the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. GCCNHS was chosen as the research locale because of its accessibility, the availability of Grade 12 students who are relevant to the study, and its alignment with the research objectives. The diverse composition of the Grade 12 population enables the researchers to obtain relevant and representative data necessary for examining the relationship between mature media consumption, public perceptions, and social treatment. As of School Year 2026–2027, the institution has more than 200 teaching and non-teaching personnel and nearly 6,000 enrolled students, making it an appropriate setting for obtaining reliable and representative data.

D. Sampling Design

To identify participants for this study, stratified sampling was employed wherein the Grade 12 population will be divided into strata based on their tracks the Academic Track and the TVL Track. This sampling technique divides the population into different strata based on shared characteristics and ensures that each group is proportionately represented in the study (Thomas, 2023). To determine the exact sample size from the total population, the researchers used the Slovin's Formula. This method is commonly used by researchers to identify an appropriate sample size when the total population is known. Using the Slovin's Formula, it helps ensure that the sample size is adequate to represent the target population. It also ensures that the sample size is sufficient to accurately represent the target population (Momin, 2025). Then, the data was collected using a researcher-made survey questionnaire designed to measure respondents' mature media consumption, level of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), perceived public perceptions, and experiences of social treatment.

E. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were Grade 12 Academic and TVL Tracks of Senior High School students in Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School. The respondents were selected because adolescents aged 17–18 are among the groups most exposed to various forms of digital media and online content. During adolescence, curiosity and the search for information contribute to greater exposure to online sexual content, there is an increased internet accessibility, smartphones, and social media use, adolescents are more likely to encounter sexually explicit materials online, whether intentionally or unintentionally; making this age group particularly relevant for studies examining perceptions and attitudes toward pornography and its consumers (Pathmendra et al., 2023; Andrie et al., 2021).

Table 1. Respondents of the Study

Grade Level	Tracks	Strand	Section	No. of Population	Sample Size
			Aquila	42	13
		STEM	Cepheus	43	13
			Electra	35	11
			Centaurus	40	12
			Hydra	47	14
	Academic	HUMSS	Phoebe	47	14

	Track		Polaris	41	12
			Pyxis	41	12
		GAS	Cassiopeia	43	13
			Lyra	34	10
12		ABM	Aries	40	12
			Aurora	41	12
		Arts and Design	Betelgeuse	52	16
			Orion	40	12
	TechPro	Home Economics	Carina	45	14
			Rigel	52	16
			Andromeda	28	8
		ICT	Pegasus	52	16
			Perseus	46	14
			Holmberg	46	14
			Phoenix	36	11
			Pleiades	34	10
Total				**925**	**279**

Table 2. Summary of the Respondents of the Study

Grade Level	Tracks	No. of Population	Sample Size
12	Academic	494	148
	TVL	431	131
Total		**925**	**279**

F. Research Instrument

The research was conducted through a researcher-made survey questionnaire that is divided into three parts: consumption of mature media (part 1), public perceptions (part 2), and social treatment of consumers (part 3). Part 1 is scaled by a Likert scale that measures level, where 5 (always) is the highest and 1 (never) is the lowest while part 2 and 3 is scaled by a Likert scale that measures level based on direction and intensity, where 5 (strongly agree) is highest and 1 (strongly disagree) is lowest.

G. Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

This part was done to ensure the reliability and validity of the survey questionnaires to be floated by the respondents. Thus, the researchers sought validation from research experts and able-professionals to check the questionnaire before performing the pilot test.

Table 3. Research Instruments Validators' Matrix

Validators	Qualifications
Validator 1	**Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English** St. Peter's College, Inc. **Master of Arts in Education Major in English** Capitol University **Doctor of Education Major in Leadership and Management** Liceo de Cagayan University *(On-going)*
Validator 2	**Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English** Christ the King College **Master of Arts in Literature** Xavier University *(On-going)*

This part was done to ensure the reliability and validity of the survey questionnaires to be floated by the respondents. Thus, the researchers sought validation from research experts and able-professionals to check the questionnaire before performing the pilot test.

Table 4. Research Instrument Reliability

Name of Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha Results	Interpretation
Consumption of Mature Media	0.84	Good
Public Perception	0.711	Good
Social Treatment of Consumers	0.626	Acceptable

H. Data Gathering Procedure

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical and standard norms. The researchers followed a thorough process to obtain the data they require. A formal request was submitted to the School Principal through the Senior High School Assisting Principal, seeking approval to conduct the research and gather relevant information. Following approval and the granting of permission, the actual respondents were provided with the research questionnaire along with an informed consent form to facilitate data collection for the current research study. The collected data was examined and assessed with the highest level of confidentiality.

I. Scoring Procedure

This scoring procedure table is for consumption of mature media (level) among adolescents.

Table 5. Scoring Procedure for Consumption of Mature Media

Point Value	Range	Description	Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41–4.20	Often	High
3	2.61–3.40	Sometimes	Average
2	1.81–2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00–1.80	Never	Very Low

The following scoring procedure table is for public perception (level) and social treatment level.

Table 6. Scoring Procedure for Public Perceptions

Point Value	Range	Description	Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Strongly Agree	Favorable
4	3.41–4.20	Agree	Accepting
3	2.61–3.40	Neutral	Ambivalent
2	1.81–2.60	Disagree	Unfavorable
1	1.00–1.80	Strongly Disagree	Hostile

Table 7. Scoring Procedure for Social Treatment of Consumers

Point Value	Range	Description	Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Strongly Agree	Inclusive
4	3.41–4.20	Agree	Equitable
3	2.61–3.40	Neutral	Indifferent
2	1.81–2.60	Disagree	Marginalized
1	1.00–1.80	Strongly Disagree	Discriminatory

J. Statistical Treatment

The study used the following statistical treatments in analyzing the data:

- Problem 1: Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of consumption students take on mature media.

- Problem 2: Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of public perceptions towards individuals who consume mature media.
- Problem 3: Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of social treatment towards consumers of mature media.
- Problem 4: Spearman correlation was used to ascertain the relationship between consumption of mature media and public perceptions towards individuals that consume explicit content.
- Problem 5: Spearman correlation was used to ascertain the influence of the consumption of mature media towards the social treatment of others upon individuals that consume mature media.
- Problem 6: Spearman correlation was used to determine the relationship between public perception and social treatment.

K. Ethical Considerations

Purpose of the study. This research was conducted with the primary purpose of contributing to academic knowledge and understanding in the selected area of study. The findings aim to inform educational practices, support informed decision-making, and promote the welfare of stakeholders involved. Approval. The conduct of this study was approved through a letter of approval signed by the Research Adviser, Assisting School Principal for Senior High School, and the School Principal of GCCNHS. Participant Selection. Participants were selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their ability to provide meaningful insights. Selection criteria are applied fairly and without discrimination, ensuring that all participants are treated with respect and dignity.

Voluntary Participation. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. All participants were informed of their rights, including the right to refuse or withdraw from the study at anytime without any negative consequences. Informed consent is obtained prior to data collection to ensure that participants fully understand the nature, purpose, and scope of the research. It is applied through thorough discussion of purpose, goals, and establishment of proper boundaries. Survey questionnaires were then given to those who are willing to answer. The said research instrument does not ask of any personal information or identifying marks that may affect the respected anonymity of the respondents.

Risks. This study does not pose significant physical, psychological, or emotional risks to participants. However, any potential minimal risks, such as discomfort in answering certain questions, are clearly communicated. Measures are taken to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of all participants throughout the research process.

Benefits. The study may offer indirect benefits, such as contributing to the improvement of practices or systems related to the research topic. While participants may not receive direct personal benefits, their involvement is valuable in supporting the broader goals of the research.

Reimbursements. No monetary compensation is offered for participation.However, the researchers express their deep gratitude for the time, effort, and insights provided by the participants. All data gathered will be used solely for academic purposes and handled with strict confidentiality.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This portion of the study presents the findings of the study with its interpretation and analysis.

Problem 1: What is the level of Mature Media Consumption among Respondents?

Table 8. Level of Mature Media Consumption

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. I often encounter mature media content recommendations online.	*3.40*	*1.051*	Sometimes	Average
2. I am exposed to mature media through social media platforms	*4.00*	*1.159*	Often	High
3. It is easy to find mature media content online.	*3.60*	*1.233*	Often	High
4. I watch/read mature media content online (such as manhwa/mangas/manhuas or fanfictions).	*3.80*	*1.377*	Often	High

5. I watch/read mature media content because I find it entertaining.	*2.50*	*1.289*	Rarely	Low
6. I spend a significant amount of time consuming mature media content.	*2.70*	*1.206*	Sometimes	Average
7. Mature media content is part of my regular online activities.	*2.50*	*1.302*	Rarely	Low
8.I engage in fandom culture involving mature artworks and pieces.	*2.50*	*1.278*	Rarely	Low
9. I feel bored viewing media that does not contain mature implications.	*3.20*	*1.242*	Sometimes	Average
10.Mature materials are pieces of art and literature to me.	*4.00*	*1.329*	Often	High
Overall Mean	**3.169**	**.5107**	**Sometimes**	**Average**

Table 8 presents the level of mature media consumption among the respondents. The findings revealed an overall mean of 3.169 (SD = 0.5107), described as sometimes and interpreted as average, indicating that respondents are moderately exposed to mature media but do not consume it consistently. Social media is consistent on handing out algorithms whether you intentionally seek a content or not. Algorithms are entirely based on user content preferences depending on what an individual actively interacts with (e.g. liking post, searching content, saving media). These small actions raise users' mature media exposure. Relatively, the highest mean score was 4.00 (SD = 1.159) for the indicator "I am exposed to mature media through social media platforms," suggesting that social media is the primary source of exposure. The overall mean and highest mean is supported by Bell et al. (2022), who explained that social media algorithms frequently expose adolescents to content they do not intentionally seek. There is a diverse level of awareness in terms of content personalization (Bell et al., 2022), which probes deeper into how students may or may not receive as much mature media content as others and vice versa. Yet, mixed cognizance among students allows misconceptions, and misunderstandings around internet algorithms. In this regard, mature media exposure has its reliance on the existing user personalization based on their frequency reach.

The indicator "Mature materials are pieces of art and literature to me" also obtained the highest mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.329), suggesting that respondents often view mature media as artistic or literary works. This may reflect the popularity of digital media such as manga, manhwa, fanfiction, and digital art. Likewise, Lammers and Marsh (2015) found that adolescents commonly engage with online fanfiction and other digital literary spaces as forms of creative expression. Mature materials are often accepted not just as content but something that holds greater value and meaning. This becomes a revolutionary idea to which, mature media is slowly losing its defamative, and negative image. Moreover, art and literature is not confined simply to creative spaces, suggesting that mature media can be a form of protest and politicization to combat existing stigma around nudity allowing new perspectives and addressing issues related to mature media (e.g. mental health deterioration, isolation) (Filippo, 2016).

In contrast, the indicators "I watch/read mature media content because I find it entertaining," "Mature media content is part of my regular online activities," and "I engage in fandom culture involving mature artworks and pieces" all obtained lower mean scores of 2.50 or rarely. This suggests that although respondents are exposed to mature media, they rarely consume it intentionally or make it part of their regular online activities. This finding is consistent with Schooler et al. (2009), who noted that adolescents are often passively exposed to media rather than deliberately seeking it.

This correlates to how mature media often comes across users through algorithms (Bell et al., 2022), thus, some content approaches users unprecedentedly. Furthermore, mature media consumption is usually viewed as distraction, and with its highly stigmatized nature individuals choose to control their consumption activities. On the other hand, Shilpa et al. (2025) argues that the consumption of adult content is influenced by several motivations, including excitement seeking, diversion, fantasy, arousal, and habitual pastime. Their study also

found that individual traits, such as sensation seeking and the need for cognition, contribute to increased binge-watching of pornographic content.

Problem 2: What is the Level of Public Perception Towards Individuals who Consume Mature Media?

Table 9. Level of Public Perception

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. I think engaging in mature content is normal.	3.40	1.088	Neutral	Ambivalent
2. Viewing mature media materials around other people is normal to me.	2.80	1.278	Neutral	Ambivalent
3. I believe there is a stigma around mature content.	2.84	1.093	Neutral	Ambivalent
4. Consumers of mature media content are often viewed differently by non-consumers.	2.62	1.057	Neutral	Ambivalent
5. Public opinions about mature media consumers are often negative.	2.48	1.038	Disagree	Unfavorable
6. I think people judge other individuals who consume mature media content.	2.30	1.022	Disagree	Unfavorable
7. I think students who watch or read mature media are often talked about negatively.	2.48	1.070	Disagree	Unfavorable
8. I think of students who read adult comics or fanfics as weird, addicted, or socially awkward.	2.94	1.168	Neutral	Ambivalent
9. I assume that students who consume explicit content are less focused on their schoolwork and grades.	2.95	1.208	Neutral	Ambivalent
10. I continue consuming mature media content despite criticism from other people.	2.80	1.228	Neutral	Ambivalent
Overall Mean	**3.48**	**o.4996**	**Agree**	**Accepting**

Table 9 shows that respondents generally have an accepting level of public perception toward mature media content, with an overall mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.4996 indicating that students are accepting in terms of public perception. Under the study of McLeod et al., (2017), repeated exposure to media such as this shapes patterns, behaviors, and perspectives of an individual. These perceptions are increasingly growing positive in recent times. Relatively, the highest mean score was 3.40 for the statement, "I think engaging in mature content is normal," indicating that respondents tend to view engagement with mature media as acceptable.

This finding supports the study of Peter and Valkenburg (2006), who found that repeated exposure to sexually explicit media contributes to the normalization of such content among individuals. Likewise, Bőthe et al. (2021) explained that people consume mature media for various motivations, suggesting that its use has become increasingly normalized rather than viewed as unusual. Through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, people may adopt behaviors they perceive as acceptable or rewarding (Kretchmar, 2024). With the normalization of mature media opens up a less stigmatized view on explicit topics, people are generally more accepting and welcoming of consumers of mature media.

In contrast, the lowest mean score was 2.30 for the statement, "I think people judge other individuals who consume mature media content," indicating that respondents generally disagree that consumers are openly judged by others. This finding is consistent with Neill (2021), who emphasized that changing media environments have contributed to more diverse and less rigid public attitudes toward media consumption, reducing overt social judgment. This suggests that dynamic media offers evolution in public perception, reducing existing stigma towards the consumption of mature media.

Furthermore, awareness of mature media and its meaning to other people creates a positive environment for perspective. Sexual education also plays a vital role in perception promoting understanding and lesser judgement towards individuals that indulge in the consumption of mature media. Consequently, inadequate

Comprehensive Sexuality Education may contribute to negative public perceptions towards mature media consumers, as society may judge them based on misconceptions rather than accurate knowledge.

Problem 3: What is the Level of Social Treatment toward Individuals who Consume Mature Media?

Table 10. Level of Social Treatment of Consumers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. I feel uncomfortable around people who frequently watch NSFW.	3.37	1.118	Neutral	Equitable
2.I avoid sitting next to, talking to, or hanging out with classmates who are known for reading or watching NSFW content.	3.28	1.056	Neutral	Discriminatory
3. I treat my classmates with the exact same level of respect and kindness, no matter what they privately read or look at online.	2.91	1.082	Neutral	Equitable
4. I respect the personal privacy of my friends and do not snoop through their phones or ask awkward questions about their NSFW hobbies.	3.12	1.085	Neutral	Equitable
5. I completely accept my peers as friends, recognizing that their private media consumption doesn't change who they are as individuals.	2.99	1.102	Neutral	Equitable
6. Knowing sexuality education makes me less judgmental of NSFW materials.	3.37	1.117	Neutral	Equitable
7. I feel like consumers of mature media content sexualizes others, so I stay away from them.	3.25	0.998	Neutral	Discriminatory
8. Consumers of NSFW materials are often outcasted.	4.12	1.017	Agree	Discriminatory
9. Students who view mature media content are more or less stereotyped by others to be perverts.	4.24	1.021	Agree	Discriminatory
10. Mature topics are avoided by the education system.	4.15	1.046	Agree	Discriminatory
Overall mean	***3.481***	***.4996***	**Neutral**	**Equitable**

Table 10 illustrates the level of social treatment experienced and perceived by consumers of mature media content, yielding an overall composite mean of 3.481 and a standard deviation of .4996, which corresponds to a descriptive rating of neutral and an overall interpretation of equitable. Despite this overall midpoint score, a detailed examination of the individual indicators reveals a significant distinction between how respondents evaluate public and institutional conditions versus how they evaluate their own personal interactions. Social treatment towards consumers of mature media is varied, depending on individual experiences and understanding of mature media. Neutral social treatment challenges positive or accepting feedback regarding mature media as a debate. The lack of Comprehensive Sexuality Education significantly challenges social treatment towards consumers often lacking proper awareness of mature media. National curriculum assessments by Goldfarb and Lieberman (2021) show that up to 73 percent of health classrooms fail to implement comprehensive sexuality or media literacy frameworks, leaving adolescents to navigate relationships on their own. Without objective guidance, the general student body relies on inaccurate social scripts.

The pronounced discrepancy between self-reported fair personal conduct (Indicators 1–7) and the strong acknowledgment of societal prejudice (Indicators 8–10) reflects a well-established pattern in social science research. As highlighted by Kohut et al. (2016) and Wright et al. (2021), self-reported evaluations regarding socially sensitive or taboo subjects are highly vulnerable to social desirability bias, leading respondents to portray their own personal behavior as tolerant and non-judgmental. Qualitative tracking by (Vanderbosch, 2022) demonstrates that peers routinely misinterpret alternative media readers, using harmful cognitive shortcuts that convert into immediate relational gossip, stigma, and targeted reputational damage. These

findings align with prior research highlighting how public stigma leads to negative labeling (Annand, 2021; Grubbs et al., 2019), social exclusion (Macleod, 2021), and institutional silence within formal curricula (Allen, 2018; Lamb, 2013).

This hostile atmosphere directly manifests through specific social penalties. (Pascoe, 2023) notes that high school peer dynamics frequently rely on aggressive social sorting to enforce conformity, where students who read explicit or non-traditional content are immediately profiled or labeled as socially deviant. However, their strong endorsement of indicators regarding peer stereotyping, social outcasting, and educational avoidance confirms that respondents remain acutely aware of the pervasive discrimination and social distance enforced against mature media consumers in everyday, social reality.

Problem 4: Is there a Significant Relationship between Mature Media Consumption and Public Perceptions?

Table 11. Relationship between Consumption of Mature Media and Public Perception

Variables	R-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Consumption of Mature Media and Public Perception	-0.230	< 0.001	Significant

Table 11 presents the correlation results between the consumption of mature media and public perception. The data show a significant negative relationship between mature media consumption and public perception ($r = -0.230$, $p < 0.001$). This means that as an individual's consumption of mature media increases, negative public perception tends to decrease. Conversely, individuals who consume less mature media are more likely to have discriminatory or hostile public perception ratings.

The negative correlation suggests that greater exposure to mature or explicit media content may be associated with individuals perceiving social issues, norms, and attitudes. This is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that people can learn attitudes and behaviors by observing media models, making repeated exposure a possible influence on beliefs and perceptions (Bandura, 2001). In this view, media content may serve as a model that viewers notice, remember, and may later reflect in their own attitudes or judgments. Additionally, the prevalent consumption of mature media changes one's public perception towards similar consumers of mature media.

Individuals who have a significant intake of mature media are more likely to accept other people who consume mature media as well. Consumers are more aware and less judgmental towards someone that partakes in the same activity as them. From the study of Speed et al. (2021), mature media consumption affects attitudes toward sexuality-related issues, suggesting that exposure to mature media may contribute to differences in how individuals evaluate and perceive such content.

The findings suggest that the way people consume media can influence how they view social and public issues. This is why media literacy and critical thinking are important, because they help people understand content carefully and avoid being too strongly affected by mature media. Media literacy is commonly described as the ability to use critical thinking when interpreting media messages, while studies also note that media can shape how people understand reality and social issues. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Problem 5: Is there a Significant Relationship between Media Consumption behavior and Social Treatment?

Table 12. Relationship between Consumption of Mature Media and Social Treatment of Consumers

Variables	Spearman's Rank	P-Value	Interpretation
Consumption of mature media and social treatment of consumers	–0.133	0.016	*Significant*

Table 12 presents the correlation results between consumption of mature media and social treatment of consumers. The data shows a significant relationship between the consumption of mature media and social treatment of consumers ($r = –.1.33$, $p = 0.016$). This implies that the higher the consumption of mature media is by a student, the lower its unfavorable social treatment towards consumers. Conversely, lower consumption of mature media likely causes higher unfavorable social treatment towards consumers. Social treatment highly

depends on how an individual is also exposed towards mature media consumption. Significant consumption of mature media lets individuals have a favorable outlook on mature media and other consumers as they are more aware and considered "relatable" with how they are likely to conform with each other. In contrast, less consumption of mature media tolerates discriminatory or hostile treatment towards people who consume mature media. This is supported by Pascoe (2023), where high school peer dynamics frequently rely on aggressive social sorting to enforce conformity, where students who read explicit or non-traditional content are immediately profiled or labeled as socially deviant.

This hostile treatment is rarely explosive; instead, it occurs through quiet, painful micro-exclusions. In relevance to the study of Ito (2023), the easy accessibility to leakage in mobile phones caused fellow classmates to know of an individual's mature consumption data discerning a different treatment of peers towards the consumer. These classmates are not openly exposed to mature media, which led to a negative outlook on known overseers of mature media. In a mixed-methods research by George and Odgers (2021), it tracks a direct correlation between the exposure of taboo digital habits and a sudden drop in a student's perceived classroom status. The negative correlation between the variables indicates how perspective-based treatment is highly relevant towards one's own practices. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Problem 6: Is there a Significant Relationship Between Public Perceptions and Social Treatment?

Table 13. Relationship between Public Perception and Social Treatment of Consumers

Variables	Spearman's Rank	P-Value	Interpretation
Relationship between public perception and social treatment of consumers	–0.041	0.454	*Not Significant*

Table 13 shows the correlation between public perception and social treatment of consumers. The data shows that there is no significant relationship between public perceptions of individuals and social treatment towards consumers ($r = -0.041$, $p = 0.454$). This means that public perception does not dictate how an individual treats consumers of mature media, but it entirely depends on how an individual approaches another person known to accessing mature media. As stated by Lippmann (1922) as cited in Routledge, 2017), public opinion is formed through people's perceptions, stereotypes, and interpretations of information rather than through direct experience.

Individuals respond to the "pictures in their heads," which influence how they judge and interact with others. Public perceptions can shape interpersonal interactions and the social experiences of mature media consumers, but through indirect processes. Arguably, Speed et al. (2022) implies that social attitude, although influenced by public perceptions is not necessarily from it, but treatment is not outwardly from perceived thoughts. It is from mature media itself. Burdick (2022) explains that public perception is shaped by media exposure, social discourse, and cultural norms, which affect how people evaluate behaviors they consider acceptable or unacceptable. Similarly, Hutagalung (2024) argues that digital platforms reinforce these perceptions through repeated exposure to similar narratives, making particular attitudes more widespread.

From these findings, social treatment towards consumers does not entirely depend on public perceptions as these treatments may be rooted through known dilemmas that surround mature media. This includes existing treatment, style of approach and stigma towards individuals that consume mature media. Regardless of public perceptions, social treatment varies from person to person. However, this does not necessarily negate the association between perceptions and treatment; yet, public perceptions are not the main correlational cause towards social treatments. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed the way individuals consume media content social media became the primary source of exposure. Respondents are often exposed to mature media content in which they are based on algorithmically personalized content; rather than intentionally engaging for satisfaction.

Moreover, the widespread distribution of mature content online normalizes its existence among respondents. The dynamic media evolution changes perception real-time based on how common such content surfaces to a user. Therefore, public perception towards the consumers viewed mature media content as a normal and acceptable behavior rather than something that should be strongly stigmatized among adolescents. In contrast, the social treatment towards the consumers of mature media content often received fair treatment and labeled as acceptable in society due to its normalization. Despite this positive treatment, public stigma, stereotyping, and social exclusion within the broader community remains unchanged and is consequently challenged.

On the other hand, the relationship between consumption of mature media content and public perception depends on how frequently they consume such content themselves; rather than directly judging those consumers. Whereas, the public perception toward consumers of mature media content may vary according to its level of consumption, in which individuals within who consumes mature content at a similar rate may demonstrate less judgement or greater understanding toward consumers, while those who rarely or do not consume such content may exhibit greater judgement or disapproval towards consumers. Lastly, the social treatment of individuals does not affect the public perception because people's judgments are more influenced by their own attitudes and beliefs toward mature media consumption rather than by how consumers are treated by others.

However, this study is limited by sample size and in-depth exploration of specific cases and precise perspectives. It does not examine participants' mental health, sexual behaviors, clinical outcomes, or the effectiveness of specific sexuality education programs. The findings are based on self-reported responses collected during the study period and are intended to represent only the selected respondents; therefore, they may not be generalized to other populations or settings. Yet, it will act as a baseline model for future researchers regarding the consumption of mature media among adolescents, and further enhance measures to understand adolescents in this age of technology, and pornography.

Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaires

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTION: Put a check in the box under the column that feels right for you.

PART I. Consumption of Mature Media

Statement	5 (Always)	4 (Often)	3 (Sometimes)	2 (Rarely)	1 (Never)
1. I often encounter mature media content recommendations online.					
2. I am exposed to mature media through social media platforms.					
3. It is easy to find mature media content online.					
4. I read mature media content online (such as manhwa/mangas/manhuas or fanfictions).					
5. I read mature media content because I find it entertaining.					
6. I spend a significant amount of time consuming mature media content.					
7. Mature media content is part of my regular online activities.					
8. I engage in fandom culture involving mature artworks and pieces.					
9. I feel bored viewing media that does not contain mature implications.					
10. Mature materials are pieces of art and literature to me.					

Figure 2. Survey Questionnaire (Consumption of Mature Media)

PART II. Public Perception

Statement	5 (Strongly agree)	4 (Agree)	3 (Neutral)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Strongly Disagree)
1. I think engaging in mature content is normal.					
2. Viewing mature media materials around other people is normal to me.					
3. I believe there is stigma around mature content.					
4. Consumers of mature media content are often viewed differently by non-consumers.					
5. Public opinions about mature media consumers are often negative.					
6. I think people judge other individuals who consume mature media content.					
7. I think students who watch or read mature media are often talked about negatively.					
8. I think of students who read adult comics or fanfics as weird, addicted, or socially awkward.					
9. I assume that students who consume explicit content are less focused on their schoolwork and grades.					
10. I continue consuming mature media content despite criticism from other people.					

Figure 3. Survey Questionnaire (Public Perception)

PART III. Social Treatment of Consumers

Statement	5 (Strongly agree)	4 (Agree)	3 (Neutral)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Strongly Disagree)
1. Mature topics such as sex are avoided by the education system.					
2. Knowing sexuality education makes me more open to seeing mature media materials.					
3. I feel comfortable around people who frequently watch mature media.					
4. Students who view mature media content are "perverts."					
5. I feel like consumers of mature media content sexualize others, so I stay away from them.					
6. I avoid sitting next to, talking to, or hanging out with classmates who are known for reading or watching mature content.					
7. Individuals who consume mature materials should always be included in social settings.					
8. I respect the personal privacy of my friends and do not snoop through their phones or ask awkward questions about their mature media hobbies.					
9. I treat my classmates with the exact same level of respect and kindness, no matter what they privately read or look at online.					
10. I completely accept my peers as friends, recognizing that their private media consumption doesn't change who they are as individuals.					

Figure 4. Survey Questionnaire (Social Treatment of Consumers)

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publishing of this paper.

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